



**NEWSLETTER OF THE LONDON CHAPTER,  
ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

*c/o Museum of Ontario Archaeology  
1600 Attawandaron Road, London, ON N6G 3M6*



January 2013

13-1

The next meeting of the London Chapter, Thursday February 13<sup>th</sup> 2014, will be **MEMBERS' NIGHT**. We are looking for a few speakers to fill out the program. If anyone has anything they would like to present, please contact Chris Ellis. The talks are short, usually about 15 minutes. We are a friendly bunch, so don't be shy and tell us what you have been up to!

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The upcoming speakers are Dr. Peter Timmins in March and Dr. Chris Watts in April.

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Speaker's Night is held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month (January to April and September to December) at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, 1600 Attawandaron Road, near the corner of Wonderland & Fanshawe Park Road, in the northwest part of the city. The meeting starts at 8:00 pm. Doors open at 7:30 PM and as usual there will be free juice and cookies!

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## ANNUAL RATES

Student	\$15.00
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## **The Old Sites Project: An Update**

**By William Fox**

During a recent visit to the McMaster University, Mills Library archives, I had the opportunity to review documents produced by famous avocational archaeologists Everett Case, Rutherford Smith, and Frank and Alfred Wood. This research sprang from my work on the Lake Medad site collections (Fox 2013a) housed at the McMaster Sustainable Archaeology facility at Innovation Park in Hamilton. While studying the Rutherford Smith documents, I came across the handwritten draft of a presentation he had made to the newly-formed Head of the Lake Historical Society at the Hamilton YMCA in December of 1944. Rutherford lived in the village of Mount Hope, just south of Hamilton, and similar to Doug Bell of Binbrook, who succeeded him in the area, he was an expert concerning the archaeological sites along the Twenty Mile Creek. Rutherford and his various associates pioneered archaeological survey in the region, and it was with no little interest that I noted his reference to the McMurray village site.

Otherwise known as the Fletcher site (Marshall 1962), I had bicycled out to this site as a teen and excavated two five foot squares in one of the middens. The report on this exploration was to have been published as an article in Ontario Archaeology No. 9 according to then editor, Dr. Rufus Churcher; however, this never transpired (Fox 2013b:3). Shortly thereafter, a high school friend invited me to his new home in Binbrook to have a look at some cardboard boxes in the garage attic, which contained paper bags full of what appeared to be artifacts. A brief inspection proved this to be the case, as it was the boyhood collection of artifacts collected on Twenty Mile Creek sites by Doug Bell during the 1940's! This material was donated to Bill Noble at McMaster University in 1971 and presently resides in the Sustainable Archaeology curatorial facility housed at McMaster. Hence, this is the source of my interest in and association with sites first recorded by Rutherford Smith.

The following is the transcribed text of Rutherford Smith's talk to the Head of the Lake Historical Society. I believe that it is in itself an important historical document concerning the activities and views of those practicing archaeology in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Professional archaeologists were a rarity and, similar to today, government funding for "CRM" was limited, as you will read! Rutherford or "Rudd", as he was known, stroked out some phrases from his talk manuscript, which I have included in brackets. Evidently, in several cases, this was done to remove farm names, which in those days might have led the curious to some of the sites. As you will note, there was an erroneous assumption in the 1940's that the latest Neutral villages were in fact post-dispersal "Seneca" villages, but this does not diminish the value of his presentation. Also, the early 17<sup>th</sup> century Christianson (Neutral) village site was identified as La Salle's Seneca settlement of Tinawatawa in Smith's time. Of particular interest to the writer is his association with other famous "collectors" in the region and the mentorship provided by William Wintemberg of the Dominion Museum in Ottawa; as well as, his consultations with the Reverend Brother Alfred concerning religious artifacts.

**Acknowledgements:** Access to the Smith manuscript was made possible by Mr. R. Stapleton and his staff, and permission for the reproduction was granted by the William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Library, Hamilton, Canada.

### REFERENCES CITED

Fox, W.A.

2013a The Old Sites Project. Arch Notes 18-3: 7-10.

2013b Reminiscences of a 20th Century Archaeologist. (26 p.) Trent Print Shop. Peterborough.

Marshall, G.R.

1962 The Fletcher Site Part 1 and Part 2. Ontario Archaeology No. 6: 8-11, 12-14.

Smith, R. And R. Murphy

1939 A Report of the Excavations of the Dwyer Ossuary. Manuscript on file at the Mills Library Archives. McMaster University. Hamilton.

## **Indian Archaeology of Wentworth Co. and Its Relation to Early Canadian History**

**by Rutherford Smith**

*(Mr Chairman & Fellow Members).*

I thought I would deal in this paper with a brief sketch of the Indian Archaeology of Wentworth Co. and its relation to early Canadian History.

The first Indian occupation of Wentworth Co. was by Algonkians, - a race that lived by the chase and had no permanent abode and seldom stayed long in one place. For that reason they left little impression except by dropped artifacts. I doubt if there is an Algonkian village site that is visible today in Wentworth Co.

We know little of why one Indian race left an area of occupation, and another came in.

The next culture was by a very different type of Indians. - These were the Attawandarons, a race of Iroquoian parentage, later called Neutrals by the French. Their time of coming was over a hundred years before the white man came. This race lived partly by the chase and partly by agriculture. They had cornfields and built bark cabins, and lived in villages, - some palisaded, which they occupied from one to twelve or more years. Brule, Champlain's interpreter saw them in 1615, the Recollet missionary visited them in 1626, the Jesuits in 1640, and the whole race was destroyed by the Iroquoians, largely Senecas, about 1651.

A few years later, the Seneca, - Iroquoians occupied this country, forming a line of villages, along the north shore of Lake Ontario, from Port Hope to the Grand River and around the Head of the Lake. La Salle and the Sulpicians, Dollier & Galinee, saw this people in 1669 and the Sulpicians under Trouve and Fenelon had missions in their various villages. – Tinawatawa, near Westover in Beverly township was one of these.

It is largely of the Neutrals that I will speak tonight. Archaeologists divide them into three groups – Pre-European, the Transitional, and the Post-European.

For many years, a small group in Wentworth Co. has been engaged in this study. This includes, Wm. Cleland and Harries Finlay of Carluke, Frank Butter of Ancaster (Seneca), Robert Murphy of Mt Hope, and also Richard Kingston of Caledonia. And of our own Society, - Mr & Mrs Steele and Mr. Wood of Hamilton.

Usually, we follow the creek banks in our search for camp sites. We never look for a site, where the banks are low, for that area was probably under water, hundreds of years ago. A sharp bend in the creek with high banks is a likely place, - for there the Indians could look two ways for enemies. The junction of a creek with the main body is an almost certain place, if there are high banks. We go to farmers whose back acres border the creeks and ask them if they have ever seen any signs of Indian camps, - and the answer is invariably, “No, - in grandfather’s time a few arrows were picked up but nothing any more”. But, along the 20 mile creek, in particular, we find camp sites ranging from single fishing camps to large villages on practically every farm, the farms having belonged to the same families for many generations, but they never observed these camps. This does not mean that we possess any magic. It is all quite simple. Look for a slight elevation of a foot or more, over a small oblong area, and note if the vegetation on it is slightly richer than on the area around it, - be it sumachs, berry bushes, mulleins or just plain grass. Take up a spadeful of the soil and if your guess is correct you will find layers of black earth and ash, fragments of Indian pottery and pieces of split deer bone, broken for the sake of the marrow, for food, - and you know you have found a bark cabin site. This may be the only one, - just a fishing camp. But if you examine the surrounding acre or more, you will probably find from six to thirty just such deposits, depending on the size of the village. – In spite of the simplicity of finding these sites, some of our group have developed amazing skill in locating them

Here in these villages, the Indians lived, until wood became scarce, cornfields worn out, or the filth of their camps, drove them to abandon the spot, and build another, possibly a few miles away. On the 20 mile creek and the Chippewa between Highway 6 and the Binbrook Highway, there are 19 known sites. This does not mean that all existed at the same time. How often we have compared two camp sites, less than half a mile apart, and pictured home and home sports and gambling games, between the two friendly villages in the long ago, - only to find on excavation, that perhaps one was abandoned two hundred years before the other was built.

The excavation consists of carefully combing the ash, which may range from three inches to three feet in depth, with trowels or short handled hoes, to retrieve everything that was lost during the period of occupation.

The period to which the camp belongs is determined by the type of artifacts found. In the Pre-European sites, bone objects are plentiful, such as awls, tally beads, needles threaded in the centre for making fish nets, bone and antler fish harpoons. Clay and stone pipes are also found, as well as great quantities of broken pieces of pottery marked with various designs. Plenty of flint war points, but few hunting arrows.

Sites of the Transitional period are very few and are chiefly distinguished by the artistic line designs on their clay pipes.

In the Post-European sites, fewer bone objects are found, and the goods of the French trader make their appearance – such as parts of copper and brass kettles, pendants and netting needles, made from worn out kettles, iron awls and axes, trade beads, finger rings made from brass wire. We find also new designs in the making of pipes.

In our excavations, we have found that Seneca Iroquoian occupation was much more extensive than was ever recorded in history. Their sites are distinguished by a higher degree of workmanship in their artifacts and by the appearance of Dutch and English trade goods. We found one Seneca site superimposed on a pre-European Neutral site in Glanford township. Superimposed sites are not uncommon. At Lake Medad, pre and post Neutral and Seneca Iroquoian appear in the same area. There is another Seneca site in Binbrook township of about 32 cabins, (known as the McMurray site) which shows evidence of having been palisaded.

A later culture of Algonkians, known as Mississaugas, made their appearance, according to Severance, about 1707, but owing to their wandering habits left no impression in camp sites.

In excavating sites two things are noticeable, - In whatever age of camp you work, you will find evidence of gambling, from the cup & pin game of the pre-Neutral, to the stone and clay disks of later cultures. The white man never taught the Indian to gamble! The Jesuit Brebeuf in the Relations records their gambling habits.

We also notice that throughout the various cultures mentioned, the longer the association with white men, the higher degree of art you find. Not that the white man helped make the artifacts, but somehow, he left his impression. This art reaches its highest degree in the wonderful effigy pipes and totems of the Senecas.

A word concerning the burial methods of Iroquoian tribes. Those strange sepulchres, that have been the perplexity of early settlers, are usually called “ossuaries”. They buried their dead in shallow graves, or placed them on scaffolds, and once every ten or twelve years, certain chiefs appointed the time and place of the “Feast of the Dead”. On that day they uncovered all the

bones of the deceased, wrapped them in beaver skins, then took every common trail to the meeting place appointed. Here they held three or more days of feasts, games, and pagan rites. A pit was dug and lined with furs or rush matting and the bones deposited, together with their wampum, their instruments of war, pipes, war paint, and everything dear to the heart of an Indian, together with pots of food for their journey to the hereafter. Then the pit was covered over. The general belief was that the soul took flight after the ceremony was ended. Many thought there were two souls, - one remaining with the bones, while the other went to the Land of shades. The Jesuit Brebeuf witnessed the making of an ossuary in the Huron country in 1636, a detailed account of which appears in the Relations.

In 1938 & 39, Mr. Murphy and I excavated one of these ossuaries in Beverly Tp. under the direction of the Dominion Archaeologist, Mr. W.J. Wintemberg. It was a very unusual one, - in fact, the only double ossuary so far recorded. It had been excavated in 1886 by the late Dr. David Boyle, and the artifacts are now in the Royal Ontario Museum. Mr. Murphy and I reopened it in a search for a few wampum beads! The hardpan bottom of the ossuary appeared at from 2 to 3 ft, and curiosity led us to investigate it. After an hour or more of digging we broke through into another ossuary which was undisturbed of a slightly previous period. The supposed hardpan, being a cement made of wood ashes and gravel. The ossuary was in size about 13 1/2 ft x 12 ft. and its greatest depth was 5 1/2 ft. No record could be made of the number buried, for many were bundle burials of men, women and children. - There were about 30 complete skeletons, placed in no set order, but all in a flexed position and on their sides. And around them, embedded in the earth, were many string of beads, of shell, catlinite and trade, along with many other artifacts (As shown in the pictures I've brought).

The question naturally arises - why are these excavations not left for the trained government archaeologist to make? - Expeditions in archaeology, are very costly, and the government does not appropriate enough money to care for 1% of the camp sites found. The farmer breaking up new land, ploughs through these sites! He picks up an arrow or a broken pipe - quickly loses them, and in a few years, the plow and harrow destroy all evidence, and nothing is ever known of the history of the site, except that "Injuns once lived here". (The late) Mr. Wintemberg gave us every encouragement, taught us to make & forward the proper records, corrected our mistakes, and was our closest friend, until his death in 1941.

Just a few of the lessons learned:

1. The kind of food and means of livelihood.
2. The animals & birds that lived here in that period.
3. The probable age of the camp sites, and in some, the time of the coming of the trader.
4. Also, the evidence of the coming of the missionary.
  - a. Many years ago near the McMurray site in Binbrook Tp. was found the remains of an iron grinding mill, commonly carried by missionaries. This is not in existence today. - Of course it might have been carried by a trader.

- b. In 1935, on a (the Brigham) site in Glanford Tp. was found the partially melted remains of a fire glass, commonly carried by missionaries, who were said to have used them to light Indian pipes in bright sunlight.
- c. In the Butter ossuary in Ancaster Tp. was found the remains of a 30 inch copper kettle, which had been patched with a plate, by means of hollow rivets. According to Greenbe, - missionaries made a practice of mending the Indians' kettles, in order to stand in with them, so as to later teach their religion.
- d. In working on a post-Neutral site this past summer, a rosary bead was found, which at first, we thought, might have belonged to a French trader, or, an Indian convert, who had been under the influence of the Jesuits at Fort Ste Marie. When, the Rev. Bro. Alfred, Past President of the Catholic Historical Society, saw it, he said it was the "Our Father" bead of a rosary, of the type carried by only missionaries and robed priests. – This can mean that it belonged to either D'aillon the Recollet who came in 1626, or the Jesuits, Brebeuf & Chaumonot, who came in 1640. I am inclined to believe that it was owned by the Recollet D'aillon. From LeClercq, and Sagard, we have a record, that D'aillon was beaten, and robbed of his religious equipment, coupled with the fact that the camp site in question, definitely belongs to early, rather than late in the post-European period of 1615-1651. But private opinions, do not make proven history. We hope to be able in time to trace it to the actual missionary who lost it.
- e. Some years ago, there was found in another ossuary near Tinawatawa, a brass religious medallion, - which is owned by Mr & Mrs Lyle Shaver of Westover (I believe some of the members of this Society have seen it). Whence came it? It could have been given to a convert by the Sulpician missionary, Trouve, who spent most of the year of 1670 at Tinawatawa. – or, it might have come from a Christian Iroquoian, who had been under the teachings of Chaumonot, Lemoine & others, in what is now New York state.

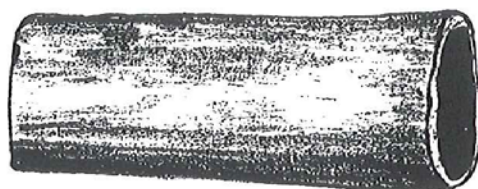
(I have brought a few artifacts from my collection, only a few, on account of the danger of breakage. The drawings are of the objects found in the ossuary and the samples of pottery are from two Pre-European Neutral sites.)<sup>1</sup>

In carrying on this work, the acquisition of the artifact is of minor importance, if collected only for the sake of the object. The main value lies in the study of the artifact in relation to the history of the people to which it belonged.

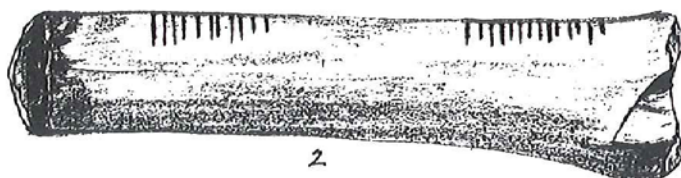
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<sup>1</sup> The drawings produced by his talented wife, Ethel, were included in Smith's 1939 report concerning his investigation of the Dwyer ossuary, which was submitted to Wintemberg. Two examples, showing bone tubes, a pot vessel and a ladle, are appended to the end of this article.

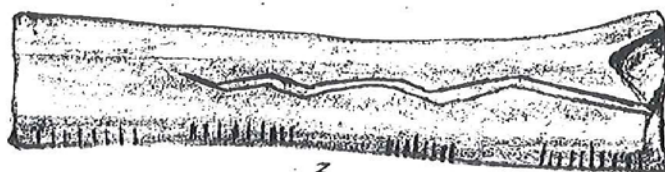
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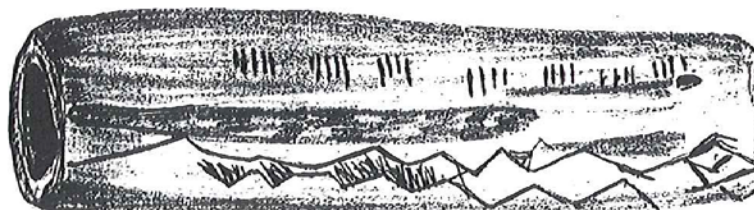
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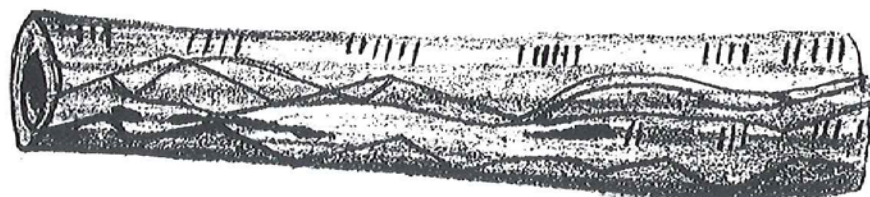
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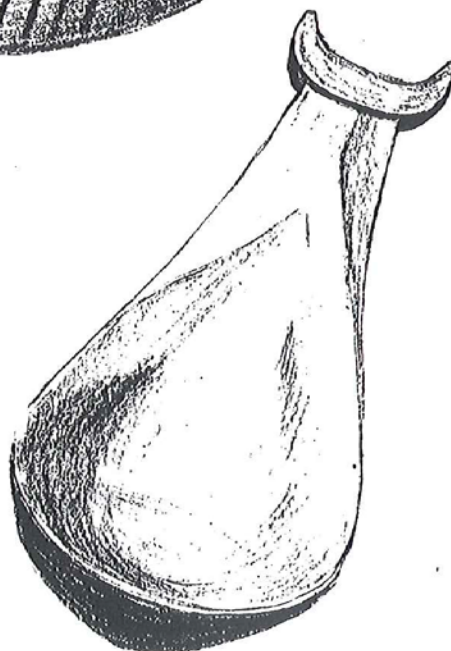
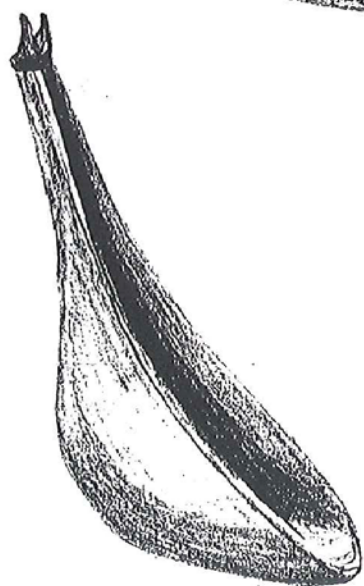
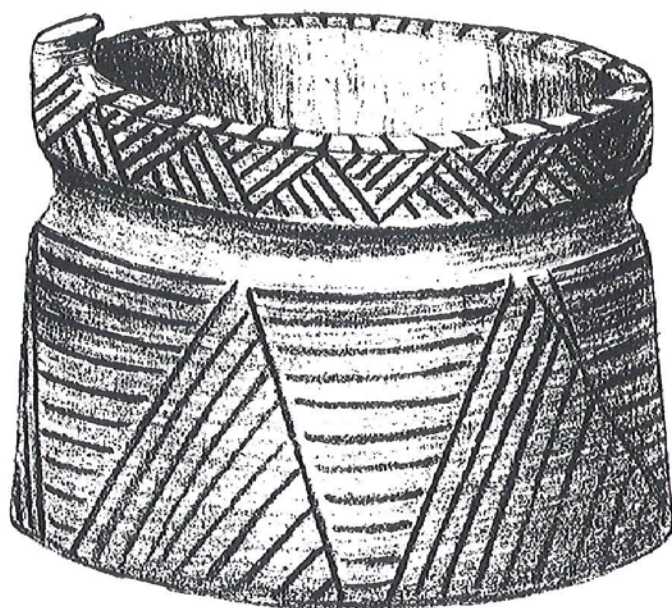
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PLATE XII



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